

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2211
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJ: KEEPING TABS ON DE PASQUALE

REF: 76 PALERMO 0468

1. SICILIAN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 13-14 VISIT OF ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT PANCRAZIO DE PASQUALE (PCI) AND OTHER SENIOR ASSEMBLY OFFICERS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN LUXEMBOURG. DURING VISIT, GROUP WILL MEET PARLIAMENT'S PRESIDENT, EMILIO COLOMBO, AND DISCUSS WITH HIM AND OTHERS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE PARLIAMENT AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN EC AND "THE REGIONS". COMMENT: TRIP WILL AFFORD ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR DE PASQUALE TO PROJECT STATESMANLIKE IMAGE, DEMONSTRATE PCI'S EUROPEAN VOCATION AND GAIN CREDIT LOCALLY FOR INTERESTING OTHER EUROPEANS IN SICILY'S NEEDS AS ONE OF EC'S DEPRESSED AREAS.

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2. LUXEMBOURG TRIP IS SEQUEL TO PROPOSED, DE PASQUALE-LED, REGIONAL ASSEMBLY GROUP VISIT LAST JULY TO TUNISIA, ALGERIA AND LYBIA WHICH WAS CANCELLED AT FOREIGNOFFICE INSISTENCE, EVIDENTLY AS TOO STRIDENT AN EXAMPLE OF REGIONAL DIPLOMACY. NO SUCH CONCERN HAS SURFACED YET ABOUT LUXEMBOURG TRIP, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE IT MORE "INTER-PARLIAMENTARY" IN NATURE.

3. WHILE ON SUBJECT, WE NOTE THAT WE ARE NOW OVER SIX WEEKS INTO THE SECOND YEAR OF DE PASQUALE'S PRESIDENCY OF THE SICILIAN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY. WHILE EVIDENTLY NEVER THE SUBJECT OF A BINDING AGREEMENT, IT WAS AT LEAST COMMON EXPECTATION (SEE REFTEL) THAT DE PASQUALE WOULD SERVE ONLY ONE YEAR. SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD HAVE PERMITTED NOMINEES OF FOUR OTHER "CONSTITUTIONAL" ARC PARTIES A ONE YEAR TERM DURING THE ASSEMBLY'S FIVE-YEAR LIFE SPAN. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT RENDERED MORE POLITICALLY PALATABLE A COMMUNIST ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT WHEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THEIR NON-COMMUNIST ALLIES HAD THE NUMERICAL STRENGTH TO EXCLUDE THE PCI FROM THE REGIONAL STRUCTURE ALTOGETHER, BUT WANTED COMMUNIST "PROGRAMMATIC COOPERATION" IN OTHER AREAS.

4. DE PASQUALE'S PERMANENCE HAS GONE ENTIRELY WITHOUT PUBLIC OR POLITICAL COMMENT LOCALLY - THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED DE PASQUALE SUGGESTS PRIVATELY THAT THE PCI AND DC WILL SPLIT TWO AND A HALF-YEAR TERMS BETWEEN THEM. NEITHER THE OTHER PARTIES WHO MIGHT HAVE HAD A SHOT AT FILLING THE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENCY NOR THE LOCAL DC-RIGHT, ONCE SO ENERGETIC IN DENOUNCING DC-PCI COOPERATION, HAVE RAISED THEIR VOICES. NOR HAS DE PASQUALE HIMSELF SOUGHT TO SHOW WHAT A GOOD DEMOCRAT HE IS BY STEPPING DOWN.
COLLINS

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